Go Hard or Stay Home backpack drive in Worcester prepares kids for school year

By Spectrum News Staff Worcester

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WORCESTER, Mass. - With the start of school right around the corner for many in Central Massachusetts, a former Holy Name basketball standout is doing what he can to make sure students are prepared.

Ryan Brown held a backpack drive Sunday afternoon at the Fraternal Order of Eagles. He and volunteers handed out backpacks, notebooks, writing utensils and all of the things you would need to start the year on a good foot. Brown is the founder of the nonprofit Go Hard or Stay Home basketball program, teaching area youth the fundamentals of basketball in hopes of enhancing one’s skills and hopefully helping them become better people along the way. The program focuses on kids whose families may not be able to afford AAU or other leagues. On Sunday, 250 backpacks were distributed, thanks in part to help from Worcester Police and Fire departments, Massachusetts State Police, Quinsigamond Community College, as well as members of the Fraternal Order of Eagles community.

"I mean I know a lot of kids and families that are in need of school supplies, struggling with money," Brown said. "A lot of people lost their job because of the COVID situation, so I want to step in. There’s a lot more people that are out there that are doing the same thing as I am so I just want to step in and help out with those still in need."

Whatever supplies is leftover will be donated to Worcester East Middle School.